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FM AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1624  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 4340  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2152  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2017  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 2588  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2927

UNCLAS ASHGABAT 001285

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SNAR](#) [KDEM](#) [TX](#)  
SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: FINAL HALK MASLAHATY SESSION  
APPROVES CONSTITUTION, DECRIES NARCOTRAFFICKING

REF: A. ASHGABAT 1229  
[1](#)B. ASHGABAT 1256

[1](#)1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

[1](#)2. (SBU) On September 26, President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov called to order the final session ever of Turkmenistan's Halk Maslahaty or People's Council. One of the main items on the agenda was for the body to approve the revised constitution. The Halk Maslahaty was formerly the supreme representative body of the country. However, the new constitution moves all the legislative/representative powers to the parliament. Therefore, upon approving the new constitution, which the Halk Maslahaty did unanimously, the body was dissolved. In the words of Berdimuhamedov, who chaired the proceeding, the organs of state power (executive, legislative, and judicial) are now rectified. (NOTE: Copies of the new constitution were not made available at the session. We expect that it will be published in the newspaper, perhaps as early as the September 27 edition. END NOTE.)

[1](#)3. (SBU) The body also approved the annual list of individuals amnestied during Ramadan. (NOTE: A list has not yet been made public, and there have been no indications how many names will be on the list. We expect that it will be published in the newspaper within the next few days. END NOTE.)

[1](#)4. (SBU) Most of the rest of the 3 1/2 hour session was taken up by speeches by members of the presidium, including Berdimuhamedov, Deputy Chairman/Foreign Minister Rashid Meredov, Parliament Chair (First Deputy Chair of the Halk Maslahaty) Akja Nurberdiyeva, and Deputy Chair of the Halk Maslahaty Kasymguly Babayev. Five speakers, including Minister of Defense Mammetgeldiyev, an artists' representative, an elder, a youth representative, and Babayev all mentioned the need to fight drug use and narcotrafficking. The elder said that religious people should especially fight drug trafficking in their midsts. Babayev alone referred to the Khitrovka shootout of September 12-13 (Ref A), and used that as an example of the threat posed by narcotrafficking. Diplomats who had attended previous Halk Maslahaty sessions said this was the first time

that drugs, or any sensitive negative subject for that matter, were mentioned.

¶5. (SBU) COMMENT: The numerous mentions of the need to fight drugs and drug trafficking is one more example that the Khitrovka shootout was a wake up call for Turkmenistan officials. While many local observers doubt the official story that the gang that fought with police were simply drug traffickers, Turkmen officials seem more committed than ever about dealing with whatever threat armed criminals pose to their society (Ref B). END COMMENT.  
CURRAN